

RECORD of a meeting of the 19th February held at Cowes Enterprise College (11.00 to 12.45 hrs.)

The above meeting was held between representatives of Cowes Enterprise College and representatives of the community and parents, as drawn together by Mrs. J. Ferris.

The meeting had been offered by the Trust and Governing Body of Cowes Enterprise College, in a desire to ensure openness with its community, following concerns raised by Mrs. J. Ferris in respect to the College's current post OFSTED position. Those attending were as follows:

For the College:	Mrs Fidler	Governor and Trustee
	Mrs Courtney	Governor and Trustee
	Mr Simmonds	Trustee
	Mr Harrison	Parent Governor
	Mr Stewart	Interim Principal
For the Community:	Mrs Ferris	
	Miss Dennett	For the Office of Andrew Turner MP
	Miss Dorley-Brown	For the Office of Andrew Turner MP
	Cllr Fuller	Independent Councillor for Cowes West and Gurnard and Parent
	Mr Carter	Parent
	Mrs Minshull	Parent

Dr Bayley Clerk to Governing Body – took the record of the meeting.

This record is provided to those attending to assist their understanding of the discussion and any of its outcomes. The record is considered by Cowes Enterprise College as a public record of the meeting and will be published on the Governing Body section of the College website. However, it is not a formal meeting of the Governing Body or the Trust and no part of the discussion or disclosed actions within this record are considered decisions on which the Governing Body of the College, as a corporate body, must act.

To further assist understanding such future planned actions to support and secure improvement of the College, which were disclosed by the College during the meeting are drawn together, for clarity, in Appendix A of this record.

1. Introductions

Individuals gave round-the-table introductions. Apologies were sent by Andrew Turner MP

2. Trust and Governing Body roles and responsibilities

Mrs Fidler gave an overview of the establishment of the Foundation Trust College who set the strategic vision, appoint a majority trustee Governing Body who run the College and holds them to account. The Trust operates as a corporate body. In the reorganisation of island schools the Isle of Wight Council, under the competition element of the 2004 Act, only accepted bids to run secondary schools from existing or new Trusts. Once Cowes Enterprise College is set-up and has a full Governing Body, the trust

steps back (to set strategic policy) whilst the running of the College passes to the Governing Body. The full Governing Body was formed in May 2012, following an administrative delay in the Local Authority's approval of the Instrument of Governance.

Mrs Fidler refuted the point made that there may be a conflict of interest due to her sitting on both the Trust Board and the Governing Body. Mrs Ferris asked if this did not mean she was in effect "judging herself". Mrs Fidler said it was not a matter of individuals but separate bodies.

Mrs Ferris asked if there was any potential conflict of interest in the Chair of the Trust also being the Vice Chair of the Governing Body. Explanation was given that the actions of both the Trust and Governing Body were effected through the corporate agreement of all members of each body or through the clear delegation of corporate responsibility, as with the Governing Body's Strategic Executive's operational responsibility for oversight of the Post OFSTED action plan. At no time were individuals in the position of taking actions forward without corporate accountability. This is further illustrated in the corporate action of the Trust determining not to intervene with its appointed Governing Body, which has been further supported by the Local Authority's decision not to use its powers of intervention.

Mrs Ferris asked if the current Governing Body and Trust had appointed Mr Russell, how the parents could have faith in any new appointment of a Headteacher made by the same bodies. Mrs Fidler and Mrs Courtney assured the meeting this would not happen as there had been lessons learned and much advice taken from highly qualified consultants.

Mrs. Ferris also wished to know if the current Governing Body or Trust had appointed the previous Principal. Some discussion occurred as to the relevance of this point but it was made clear that this appointment had been made by the College's Interim Governing Body, with extensive support and advice from a senior Local Authority Officer and consultants from the recruitment arm of Times Education. Further debate, supported by comment from those representing the MP's office, identified that the Island was not always successful in attracting the best fields for secondary headship and that the Governing Body should be supported in its actions to date. Cllr. Fuller also expressed the view, whilst there were lessons to be learned from the past, that the College might well be in a worse position, if it was not for the effective support and action of the Governing Body.

A general discussion followed on the implications of island school reorganisation and whether it was felt to have had an impact on the development and performance of the new College. Neither the Trust nor the Governing Body representatives would comment on this matter. Mr Stewart, however, agreed it had had an enormous impact on the College.

The Interim Principal said that speaking as a professional there was bound to be some impact from bringing four existing schools into one. Overall College representatives responded that any re-organisation would have had an impact but re-organisation was not a reason for the OFSTED judgement. This was much more to do with the limitations in pupil progress, which despite the College achieving better GCSE results in summer 2012, of any achieved by the closed predecessor school, were not sufficient progress for the capability of its pupils. There was an explanation given about why the new college cannot be judged against previous OFSTED reports on the old school.

Following the OFSTED Inspection (Nov 2012) the Trust worked collaboratively with the Local Authority to decide whether to use their intervention powers for removal of the Governing Body. However, OFSTED

saw the Governing Body as a 'strength and rigorously challenging', so the Trust in consultation with the Local Authority has retained the Governing Body and jointly keep this decision under review. Independently the Local Authority has also determined not to use its powers of intervention.

Mrs Fidler asked again why this meeting was "needed". Mrs Ferris replied her many questions and concerns remained unanswered. The two parents gave detailed accounts of why they felt the meeting to be vital. Mrs Fidler accepted this reasoning.

3. OFSTED Inspection and Action Plan

The OFSTED Inspection of the former Cowes High School was undertaken using a different inspection framework. The OFSTED Inspection of Cowes Enterprise College of November 2012 used, the new from September 2012 framework, which focuses on the student's overall rate of progress, the quality of learning and teaching and the value added by the College.

Comment from those representing the MP's office confirmed this position and that Cowes might only be the first of the Island secondary schools in this position as pupil progress overall is a serious and longstanding issue across the Island. The parents stated that whilst this is regrettable this was not the agenda for this meeting.

Mr Stewart was appointed Interim Principal in consultation with Local Authority in December 2012. BC a consultancy at arms length to Kent County Council was commissioned, on the direct advice of the Local Authority Chief Executive, in his role as Director of Children's Services, as Improvement Partner in January 2013. Praising Mr Stewart for all he had done in such difficult circumstances and advising that she had heard nothing but good reports on his work, Mrs Ferris asked why there was no Head in place as yet, temporary or otherwise. Comments from the meeting praised the Interim Principal for all he had been able to do in difficult circumstances. Whilst these comments were welcomed, by all, the Interim Principal made it clear that this was his first experience of leading a school and that he would welcome the experience and guidance of a full-time Executive Principal. Those representing the MPs office commented that experienced leaders with the skills needed to turn failing schools around are in short supply and are rarely available immediately.

The Governing Body in consultation with the local authority is seeking to appoint a temporary Executive Head Teacher to be in post by Easter, to supplement the support offered by the Improvement Partner. The OFSTED Action Plan is robust and has been submitted to OFSTED for comment and approval. The Improvement Partner is now working with the College and Governing Body with some support of the Local Authority in the initial stages of the plan's implementation. Parents should be able to see evidence of these actions, as with modification of the curriculum, shortly after half term. The Interim Principal confirmed that this communication would be by a regular weekly newsletter to all parents. However, a final view on the plan and the effectiveness of the initial actions will not be confirmed by OFSTED until after the first OFSTED Monitoring visit, which could be any time after half-term.

The Governing Body has met with the DfE and Local Authority to explore a transition to Academy status. The DfE found the OFSTED Action Plan sufficient at this stage. A majority of those present accepted that if OFSTED assessed the Governing Body as a strength this should be built upon as we move forward, with the support of the Local Authority and the Improvement Partner.

The Trust and Governing Body cited parent complacency in reporting problems as a contributory factor to the poor results of the College. The College emphasised the importance of parents having sufficient trust

to let it know of their concerns or complaints. The point was made that the College can not act upon what it does not know about. Mrs. Ferris took this to mean that the College was saying that the parent body was complacent. This was refuted by the College and other comments did not support this view.

4. Health and Safety

Health and Safety within the existing college building is the responsibility of the Interim Principal, Mr Stewart. Risk Assessments for in-college and external activities are in place. The fire evacuation routes have been assessed as safe and adequate. The College has a Health and Safety Committee including staff association representatives. The College site is still the responsibility of the Local Authority. Mr Stewart confirmed that the existing building has had an independent Health and Safety and Fire Risk assessment and has been declared safe. Further remedial work is being undertaken and Mr Stewart is in regular liaison with the Local Authority as these works continue. Mr Stewart's focus is on improving Teaching and Learning across the whole College with a priority consideration on Years 10 and 11.

5. Parental concerns Parents of years 10 and 11 raised concern over the amount of time spent outside the GCSE curriculum. Mr Stewart reassured the meeting that, with the School Improvement Partner he has reviewed the curriculum and enrichment programmes to address inconsistencies and quality and will introduce a revised timetable and curriculum model, with a greater focus to the GCSE courses after half-term. The College will also be beginning work with the School Improvement Partner to ensure a greater emphasis, in the future, to its specialism of Business and Enterprise in its curriculum model. This was welcomed by the parents and Cllr. Fuller.

Discussion identified that the College has ways of hearing and listening to the student voice, as with mentors, Student Council, form teachers. However, this is an area of constant effort to ensure that all students feel comfortable in raising issues with their teachers. The College acknowledged that communication and roll out of the Tablet Computers had been poor and was now a priority for resolution. Mrs Fidler and Mr Stewart confirmed that a decision will be made next week and communicated to parents by Friday 1st March.

Communication and how parents could raise their concerns was widely discussed. The College acknowledged that this was a key area for improvement and gave the following as examples;

The newly established Parent Council is a statutory body which monitors the running of the College and can investigate any area of provision or concern and then make recommendations to the Governing Body. As a Trust school this gives the parents a unique voice within the operation of the College. Note was made of the need for further parent nominations within the Parent Council (representatives for Year groups 11, 12 and SEN are still vacant)

The process by which parents can make their concerns known was also emphasised and the College took up the helpful suggestion from the meeting that this as outlined below could be in the next newsletter.

Parents are encouraged to raise complaints directly with the College Interim Principal and then if not satisfied with the outcome, complain to the Governing Body. The College is currently progressing a number of parental complaints.

Those representing the MP's Office asked if the College would proceed with anonymous complaints, as sometimes they are asked to pass on complaints without revealing who has raised them. The College

responded that it was always difficult to take such complaints to a position of final action, however, where such complaints raised issues of the quality of learning and/or teaching or any issue regarding the safeguarding of pupils they would be investigated and if firm evidence was found to support the complaint then the appropriate action would be taken.

The newsletter would from half term become a weekly feature of the College's communication.

The meeting noted the supportive comments for the work of the Trust and Governing Body from those representing the MP's office, in confirming that what has currently been done was supportive to improving the College and would be the norm for a school in the situation of the College. Similarly the support and offer of help from Andrew Turner MP in the decision to achieve Academy status was welcomed. Cllr. Fuller also offered his support willingness to work with the College and community to achieve the successful and high performing school all wanted.

Keith provided a short positive update on progress with the new building. It was noted that a future meeting with Andrew Turner MP, Paul Fuller and the College Trustees and Governors would be welcomed and helpful in a full understanding of any further developments. Mrs Ferris thanked everyone for making time to attend meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm.

APPENDIX A

This appendix list the actions the College disclosed during the meeting, which are already in hand to either improve communication or the quality of provision.

1. By Friday the 1st March 2013 the College will have communicated to all parents its decision in relation to the release of tablet computers and the launch of the 1 to 1 Computing scheme to support learning. This would be undertaken by the Interim Principal and the Governing Body.
2. Subject to the availability of a suitable person and the support and agreement of the Local Authority the Governing Body is seeking to appoint from Easter 2013 a full-time experienced Executive Principal to lead the College until such time as it becomes an Academy.
3. From the week ending the 1st of March 2013 the College, to improve communication, will publish a weekly newsletter. This will be led by Mr. R. Thomson for the College's leadership but any contact or enquiries should be to the Interim Principal.
4. Subject to final agreement with the School Improvement Partner and the Governing Body the Interim Principal will publish details of modifications to the curriculum which should provide a tighter emphasis to key examination courses, particularly for years 10 and 11. The Interim Principal expects to publish this information in a letter to parents by March 8th 2013.
5. The meeting also emphasised the process by which parents should raise their concerns or complaint to the College. This information, as set out below will be further publicised in the forthcoming newsletter and on the College website.

Raising a concern or complaint with the College;

- Initially contact the College either by telephone (insert no.), email (insert address) or in writing to the Interim Principal.
- Clearly state your concern or complaint.
- Your concern or complaint will be logged and you will receive within two working days an acknowledgement, short statement of intended action and an indication of a timescale by which you will have an outcome.
- For the college to be able to fully investigate any concern and/or complaint you may need to provide evidence or be willing to discuss with a senior member of staff.
- Usually, within ten working days you will receive a written explanation of any investigation and/or action the College has taken in respect of your concern or complaint. You may also be invited to meet with a senior member of staff to discuss the outcome of your concern or complaint. In a small number of cases, for example in respect to pupil safeguarding or where a matter has to be referred to the Police it may take longer than the ten working days to resolve. In such cases you will be

informed of this position within the ten working days and receive regular updates of the progress of the matter.

- Where you are not satisfied with the outcome given to you; you can make a formal complaint to the Governing Body. This should be made by email or in writing to (insert Kenneth's contacts). You must include your original concern or complaint and copy of the outcome the College has communicated to you.
- This will be acknowledged within two days of receipt. The acknowledgement will include a statement of how the Governing Body will proceed and an indication of the timescale to resolve your complaint.
- In such complaints you may need to give evidence to a panel of up to three governors. In such complaints you may need to give evidence to a panel of up to three governors.
- On occasions you may feel your complaint is so serious it must go directly to the Governing Body. In such cases email or put in writing your complaint to Clerk to the Governing Body at KBayley@cowesenterpriseacademy.org.uk in these cases the Governing Body reserves the right to first ask the Principal of the College to investigate your complaint.